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Chair

Mr. Stephen Fuhr

Standing Committee on National Defence

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● (1100)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.)): This is my makeshift gavel. I don't have one right now.

Thank you, everybody, for coming this morning to the Standing Committee on National Defence.

We're getting close to the end of our discussion on Canada's contribution to international peacekeeping, but I'm thrilled that we have the folks we have here to add value to this discussion.

From the United Nations Association in Canada, we have Kathryn White. From the Women, Peace and Security Network-Canada, we have Beth Woroniuk. Joining us through VTC from Washington, D. C., we have Dr. Bruce Jones with the Brookings Institution. From Calgary, Alberta, we have Dr. David Bercuson, from the Centre for Military, Security and Strategic Studies.

I'm going to yield the floor to Kathryn White first.

Since we have four people planning to speak, in order for us to manage the time constraints, if you ever see this sign, it means that I'd like you to wrap it up in 30 seconds so the committee will have a chance to ask questions.

Ms. White, the floor is yours.

Ms. Kathryn White (President and Chief Executive Officer, United Nations Association in Canada): Chair, honourable members, Beth, David, Bruce, and colleagues, thank you for this opportunity to address you on behalf of my board and our 35,000 members around the country as part of a 73-year-old national civil society organization, and also for global civil society, on behalf of the World Federation of UNAs, for whom I serve as elected chair.

At this challenging time in geopolitics, one of the key remaining notions about international co-operation that tie the UN members together is that everyone believes in aid, in development and in peacekeeping. In 2015, the General Assembly unanimously approved the sustainable development goals as a framework for guiding programming up to 2030. These include ambitious pledges to eradicate extreme poverty. The global consensus is that this is the path forward to maintain cohesion on global issues. Your committee, in your governance role, has grappled with the evolving realities of UN peacekeeping. You will be aware that Canadian citizens have long had a regard for this historic role, since Lester B. Pearson used his graceful diplomatic skills in that significant Sinai deployment.

I also acknowledge the innovative discipline, military and other contributions that the Government of Canada has been making to UN peacekeeping over many years.

I also want to commend the Government of Canada and the Minister of Defence's innovations and leadership on enhancing the protection of children; increasing the participation of women in peace ops; announcing the ambassador for women, peace and security; and providing capacity-building to civil society. You'll know what the documents behind those initiatives are. I think that better peacekeeping occurs when we are all working together in inclusive security.

I'm also proud of UNA-Canada's own contributions, including on the engagement of youth in peace-building and peacekeeping through a series of consultations. We also had a conference in parallel to the UN Defence Ministerial almost a year ago in Vancouver.

Of course, we are also a proud founding member of Women, Peace and Security, but my colleague will speak articulately on those issues as well.

Here are some some recommendations.

We applaud the Elsie initiative.

We also caution that there are risks in monetizing rewards for women peacekeepers from countries that are not used to deploying women. The potential is that it puts a stress that there be more than one deployment a year. I think we should keep these issues in mind, as I'm sure we will.

I also encourage the continued investment of women in peacekeeping at the grassroots level. Again, my colleague will talk a bit more about this.

I'm going to get very specific—because I know that you are going to New York—to call for Canada to place 10 gender advisers attached to the UN DPKO. I'm not looking for the very senior people, but people who will actually be deployed with troops. I'm delighted that our CDS has been a supporter. We have a gender adviser in Mali, but this is different. This provides cohesion and coherence across all of the TCCs, or troop-contributing countries, and I think it's something that we could do. I will also point out to you that the Pentagon just announced at the end of last week $1 million for training gender advisers, which I'm also pleased about, under the circumstances.

On the ambassador's position, again, we applaud this. I urge you to consider that this has to be a person who can speak with ovaries to the military, and is confident in doing so, as well as to be an open listener to grassroots women who are not used to being consulted on these issues.

Next is engaging civil society. The protection of civilians is increasingly vexing and complex in modern peacekeeping, not least because this is what asymmetrical threats look like, as you know. They are often targeting civilians. It seems to me that the Canadian Forces have been well trained on GE 9, but I would also like to encourage the gender and civil society engagement throughout the command structure, and to explore new ways to engage civil society in order to protect them on the ground. This is part of holistic, inclusive security, and I think Canada has led on this with development, diplomacy and defence, as well as, of course, governance and gender.

● (1105)

We commend the UN Secretary-General's initiative on action for peacekeeping. I'm also pleased to see that Canada did sign up. We're one of 148 countries.

In terms of youth, peace and security, increasingly we feed conflict. We feed radicalization with young people. It seems to me that this is an area Canada could contribute to. We know from global studies and from our own work, along with the UN Secretariat's review of Resolution 2250 on youth, peace and security, that what youth are looking for is meaningful employment and stewardship, and this is in fragile and failing states. It seems to me that Canada can contribute, including on the defence side of this as well.

Finally, on the future of peacekeeping, considering current deployments in peacekeeping, a lot of them in the African continent, it seems to us that we have to work on the diplomatic side to ensure that the AU and ECOWAS are increasingly seen in their leadership role, to support them and to invest in them, so that they are contributing as well.

I also want to acknowledge that Canada has had a historic leadership role in the deployment of police. Increasingly, we are in urban settings. Police are skilled in working in urban settings, so I encourage you to maintain Canada's strategic advantage there as well.

In peacekeeping and peace ops training, you won't be surprised that ... I'm aware that you've been spoken to here about both the loss of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre and the potential to reform or restructure something such as that. I would encourage you to also consider the thinking part of that, the policy development part, the innovation part, the sharing of promising practices.

Yes, in terms of training, the military does a wonderful job, including recognizing its role in the engagement of civil society, but it is not the same thing as an arm's-length organization that does this, so I urge you to consider that as well.

I have left you some swag. It's important swag. It is a copy of the Charter of the United Nations, which begins, "We the peoples". This is why we come together in support of global peacekeeping—because it builds our peace.

I have also shared with you a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UDRH. It is the 70th anniversary of this declaration. The first draft of that document was pencilled, not penned, by John Humphrey. His version is in the basement at McGill University. It's something we should all be proud of, and we're all in this room because we aspire to live it.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. White.

Ms. Woroniuk, the floor is yours.

● (1110)

Ms. Beth Woroniuk (Coordinator, Women, Peace and Security Network – Canada): Good morning, Mr. Chair, committee members and fellow witnesses. Thank you very much for the invitation to appear before you today.

I coordinate the Women, Peace and Security Network-Canada. We're a volunteer network of over 20 organizations and another 60-plus individuals. Our primary purpose is to monitor the commitments and actions of the Canadian government on the women, peace and security agenda. We see our role as a critical friend with the government. We applaud when there are advances, but we also don't hesitate to push for improvements or point out shortcomings. The important role played by our network has been acknowledged by the government.

My starting point for looking at Canada and peacekeeping or peace support operations is somewhat different from that of many other witnesses for this study. I would like to thank the committee for inviting a different perspective: a civilian perspective, and one of a women's rights activist—dare I even say a feminist perspective. This type of voice is not always heard in discussions of peacekeeping or security. We hear again and again from women activists in countries where there are peace support operations that they are not invited to the table, so I thank the committee for making space for us here today.

The women, peace and security agenda is often dated back to the year 2000, with the passage by the UN Security Council of Resolution 1325. The resolution acknowledged the critical link between the security of women and the security of states, and opened the door for analysis of these connections and synergies. Yet, women's organizations had been working to bring their perspective to peace and security long before that.

This agenda is often defined as having four pillars: one, the participation of women in peacemaking and all forms of conflict resolution, including peacekeeping; two, protection or dealing with conflict-related sexual violence; three, the prevention of armed conflict in the first place; and four, ensuring that post-conflict recovery benefits both women and men and, where possible, works to narrow gender gaps.

I refer you to the report of the House Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development entitled "An Opportunity for Global Leadership: Canada and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda", tabled in the House almost two years ago. This excellent report contained recommendations addressing peace support operations, and I encourage this committee to take up these recommendations.

I'd also urge this committee to look at Canada's national action plan on women, peace and security, and ensure that all recommendations are consistent with and reinforce the commitments in this plan. This plan was launched less than a year ago by Minister Freeland. It is signed by seven ministers, and it outlines a comprehensive and ambitious set of targets that, if implemented, would set Canada up as a global leader on women, peace and security. The national action plan makes numerous commitments related to peacekeeping, peace support operations, and Canada's international deployments. We urge this committee to ensure that its recommendations recognize and build on these commitments.

In the time I have left, I'd like to focus on four issues: the Elsie initiative; the importance of taking a broad context around the goal of deploying more Canadian women in peace operations; incorporating a gender perspective into Canadian approaches to peacekeeping; and sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeeping personnel.

My colleague mentioned the Elsie initiative. In November of last year, Canada announced the Elsie initiative, naming it after the pioneering aeronautical engineer Elsie MacGill. As others have noted, this is a pilot project to accelerate women's meaningful participation in the United Nations peace support operations. Despite long-standing goals to increase women's participation in UN peace support operations, progress has been glacial. Currently, just under 11% of UN police and approximately 5% of military deployments are women.

The Elsie initiative includes research on what works, technical support for troop- and police-contributing countries to address barriers, and a global fund to incentivize increased deployment of women to peace operations, which is highly debated, as my colleague mentioned.

It is important to note that the Elsie initiative is path-breaking and holds great potential. It is an example of how Canada can lead at the UN. However, three major concerns can be noted.

First, the Elsie initiative focuses on getting other countries to deploy more women. It seems rather contradictory to urge others to increase deployment percentages without turning this focus inward. We did hear last week that Canada will undertake the same assessment of barriers facing women as the Elsie partner countries. This is good news.

● (1115)

Second, as raised by Dr. Baruah in discussions with this committee, there are important concerns around the argument that increasing the participation of women will lead to increased effectiveness of peace operations. All peace support operations personnel must take responsibility for improved effectiveness in addressing issues of gender-based violence, not just the women members.

Third, Canada's attempts to support UN peace operations must take a broad view. There is a need to support and fund the full range of gender-mainstreaming initiatives in peace support operations. Deploying more women without addressing the overall capacity of peace support operations to implement the full range of gender equality issues will take us only so far. I'll elaborate on what this involves in a minute.

My second issue is the importance of looking at the full range of challenges and opportunities in deploying more Canadian women as part of our own peacekeeping initiatives. While we strongly support Canada's increasing the percentage of women deployed to international missions, we have heard that the conditions must be in place to ensure their success. The focus cannot be on numbers alone. There are institutional, cultural, structural, attitudinal and logistical issues in peace support operations that must be addressed to ensure that these deployments are effective. It is crucial to ensure that women peacekeepers have proper training, medical support, equipment and facilities.

As well, research shows that women peacekeepers are subject to harassment and abuse, often called blue-on-blue violence. Understanding and addressing issues related to sexism and homophobia in the security sector is critical. Canada's efforts to tackle these issues through initiatives, such as Operation Honour, must yield results if we are to be a credible advocate on the global stage. Learning from these initiatives can also be shared with contributing countries. This is an important issue for peacekeeping as a whole, as well as to the Canadian contribution to any mission.

My third issue is addressing gender perspectives in peacekeeping. It is important to note that there are both global and Canadian commitments to do more than increase the number of women in peace support operations. There are commitments to integrating a gender perspective. This includes understanding how diverse women and men are affected differently by armed conflict generally, and by peace support operations more specifically.

This key insight has been recognized by our own Department of National Defence. I have heard the chief of defence, General Vance, speak eloquently on this subject, and I have no doubts about his commitment. We are pleased to see work proceeding within both DND and the Canadian Armed Forces, through the implementation of the chief of the defence staff's directive on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.

Yet, more work is required to build skills, construct training that actually works, and develop guidance across all work areas, from procurement to relations with local populations. This includes, but is not limited to, gender analysis—supported by gender advisers, as mentioned by my colleagues—across all issues, including the rule of law, protection of civilians, security sector reform, and consultations with women's organizations on the ground. It involves including gender issues such as conflict-related sexual violence in mission mandates. It involves improved gender data, capacity-building and training on gender analysis and gender perspectives, including participation from women's organizations. It is important that this training be directed at leadership, not just the rank and file. It also involves specific programs to increase women's participation in post-conflict reconstruction, the deployment of women protection advisers, as well as improved reporting on all of these issues.

Canada's national action plan stresses the importance of civil society and women's organizations. How peace operations interact with local populations is crucial. We have heard from women on the ground that their main interaction with UN peacekeepers is seeing the Jeeps drive through their villages without stopping, just turning up dust. There is much to be done to ensure that peace support operations personnel, both military and civilian, have the skills and abilities to interact effectively with local populations, drawing on the skills, knowledge and expertise of local women's rights organizations and activists.

The final issue to highlight is sexual exploitation and abuse. One of the major stains on UN peacekeeping has been the long-standing issue of peacekeepers abusing and committing violence, including sexual assault, against the very people they are there to protect. Despite universal outrage, this issue has proved remarkably difficult to address.

There are, however, numerous recommendations on the table. For example, AIDS-Free World's code blue campaign advocates for a special court mechanism, arguing that investigation and prosecution must be distanced from internal UN processes.

● (1120)

Canada has spoken out on the importance of effectively addressing sexual exploitation and abuse at the UN. We urge continued vigilance, both at the UN and in all peace support operations Canada participates in.

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge the work done to date by the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, the RCMP and Global Affairs Canada. However, the issues are complex and more work is required to ensure that our performance delivers on the ambitions we have outlined in global settings.

I'll leave you with the recent words of our hard-working Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chrystia Freeland, who noted last week in New York, "We need to bring feminism to peacekeeping. It's time to end the patriarchy in peacekeeping missions."

Thank you for the invitation. Thank you for listening. I look forward to the discussion.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Dr. Jones, the floor is yours for 10 minutes, please.

Thank you.

Mr. Bruce Jones (Vice-President and Director, Foreign Policy, Brookings Institution): Thanks very much.

Chair, honourable members, and witnesses, thank you for having me here. It's a pleasure to speak to you, even if it's via remote.

I thought it might be most useful for me to step back for a couple of minutes and put the conversation about Canada's current contributions in the slightly wider context of the evolution of conflict and the evolution of peacekeeping. I'll do it very briefly.

I think it's worth understanding that since the end of the Cold War, we've seen essentially three phases of evolution in UN peacekeeping.

There was a phase from the late eighties to the mid-nineties, which I think could most charitably be described as a phase of experimentation, when the UN was experimenting with new forms of peacekeeping after the end of the Cold War. There were some successes in that phase in Mozambique, El Salvador and elsewhere, but also a series of searing strategic failures in Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Angola and elsewhere.

That led to a second phase, which I think we could describe as a phase of reform, led largely by Kofi Annan when he became Secretary-General. It saw the UN substantially increase the size of its deployments relative to the fighters it was confronting; substantial improvements in command and control; a recognition that impartiality as a core principle of UN peacekeeping did not limit the UN from fighting back against spoilers or those trying to undermine peace agreements; and the adoption of what's called "multi-dimensionality"—i.e., the integration of security, economic, and humanitarian instruments under an overall political framework.

The large expansion of peacekeeping during this phase from about the mid-nineties to 2010 is highly correlated with and certainly contributed to—you can't really say "caused"—a phenomenon that doesn't get discussed much, which was a 40% decline in all wars worldwide during that period and an 80% decline in major wars. UN peacekeeping, as well as peacekeeping by other actors, such as NATO and regional organizations, played a major role in the substantial decline in the level of war in the world during that period.

The third phase is what we're in now, which is a post-Arab Spring phase, where we've seen in effect the integration of two agendas: a counterterrorism agenda on the one hand, and a civil war management agenda on the other. In the period from 2010 to the present day, more than 90% of all battle deaths have occurred in wars where a terrorist organization is one of the combatants. In other words, you can no longer meaningfully separate questions of civil war management on the one hand from issues of counterterrorism on the other. These slide across a range of scale of difficulties, from the extremely difficult, like Syria, to the rather less difficult, like Mali, but we're confronting new challenges across the spectrum.

For countries like Canada, I think that creates three options for contributing to conflict management.

One is deployment through NATO, which we did in Afghanistan, of course. There are substantial advantages to NATO in terms of military capacity, military punch and CT capacity, etc., as well as substantial disadvantages. NATO has proven to be rather bad at multi-dimensionality, and I think across large swaths of Africa and the Arab world it confronts a substantial built-in disadvantage in terms of the perception of legitimacy or illegitimacy of a western-based platform.

The second option is coalitions of the willing. We're seeing these deployed more effectively in the last several years, most notably with the Global Coalition against Daesh, but also with the G5 in the Sahel and the multinational force against Boko Haram. Those are performing quite effectively. They have the disadvantage of operating in a kind of questionable legal domain and a questionable legitimacy domain and not having the instruments for multi-dimensionality that the UN, when it has done its best, has been able to deliver.

The third option is what I would describe as hardened UN peacekeeping, which we're seeing in southern Lebanon, Mali and the DR Congo, where the UN still operates under relatively traditional concepts of peacekeeping, such as impartiality, but with substantially greater punch capacity and a substantially greater capacity to fight back against spoilers and those who would derail peace agreements or otherwise threaten the peace and stability of the country in question.

The implications for the UN are that it requires—it's not an option; it requires—the participation of sophisticated troop contributors such as the Dutch, the Chinese and the Canadians if these missions are going to be successful. It does, in my view, require an evolution of the legal framework to recognize that there are times when the UN will be a party to conflict. There's nothing wrong with being a party to conflict; it's a perfectly recognizable legal category. The UN should at times see itself as a party to conflict.

● (1125)

It requires a willingness to use force against spoilers and against groups that are dedicated to eroding civilian security, eroding a peace agreement, and eroding the stability of the country in question, and it requires effective backstopping from headquarters.

I think all of those conditions are at least largely present in Mali, where Canada is now deploying, of course. I applauded the decision for Canada to deploy in Mali, just as I had applauded Canada's contribution to ISAF in Afghanistan. I think it matters a great deal that Canada chose to contribute at the harder edge of UN peacekeeping. It's the lighter edge of the counterterrorism spectrum, but the harder edge of UN peacekeeping. That's where the evolution needs to be.

We will see now a world in which UN peacekeeping is essentially only deployed in a context where there are CT components, and we have to evolve and develop the capacities for that if we're going to have the instruments available to us to help manage fragile states and civil wars with a CT component.

By contributing to Mali's operation, Canada has given itself a stronger platform than it's had in the last several years to push the policy framework at the UN and develop a stronger policy voice at the UN on the evolution of these instruments.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Dr. Jones.

We'll go to our formal questioning right now, and I'm going to give the first question to MP Gerretsen. The floor is yours.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): My questions are for Ms. White. Thank you very much for being here and presenting today.

In March 2018, the United Nations Association in Canada released a letter to the editor, which mentioned that "Canadians understand the value and urgency of confronting instability and conflict around the world." In that same editorial, it was mentioned that your organization "commissioned a poll where 88% of respondents, across gender, age and political party affiliation, support, strongly support or do not oppose deploying soldiers and police to UN peacekeeping."

Can you give us any more information about the findings in that poll?

Ms. Kathryn White: I can, with pleasure.

I think that, importantly, in terms of opposed or strongly opposed, there are only 11%. The numbers in terms of support are strongest among those 60 and older. They are also strongest in terms of support.... They're pretty good, actually, across the spectrum. Our data is broken down by our pollster.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I'm just going to jump in there for a second, because I'm limited in time.

If you don't know exactly, tell us anecdotally why you think it's strongest among those older than 60.

Ms. Kathryn White: Again, I am a sociologist, so I'm reluctant to step out there, but I might guess that this is a cohort that has experience and memories of UN peacekeeping at another time.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I would agree with you. A number of witnesses who have come forward to this committee have been commenting on the fact that education around the importance of peacekeeping missions within our own population domestically seems to be something that we lack.

Do you think that increasing educational awareness and educational experiences or educational programs on the importance of peacekeeping missions would be beneficial, not just as it relates to relations abroad but also to the importance of what it does for security at home?

● (1130)

Ms. Kathryn White: Yes.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Okay, thank you.

Can you give us any ideas as to how you think the government can better support civil society on raising the engagement and improving education on the peacekeeping file? How do we do that in this day and age, to get to those in the under-60 cohort?

Ms. Kathryn White: Right. In fact, their numbers are still pretty strong, by the way, and I would be happy to share the breakdown of the polling data with you.

I think the engagement of youth, as I said, is critically important in terms of social media, even the risks of radicalization. We're not in a small world, not immune to any of this, so the more our young people are educated and engaged.... It is also just good governance. In other words, they're involved with their government in those kinds of decision-making and so on.

Our own work has shown.... I mentioned to you that we are doing consultations with youth—in other words, those under 30 years old. I would say that even getting into the school system, as we have done in the past.... You will know that the breakdown is formal, informal and non-formal education, with non-formal being basketball groups and so on, and informal being the Boys and Girls Club, which UNA-Canada works closely with as part of the national youth-serving alliance. We do need to get those messages out to young people.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I heard you talk about two ways we could do that. One would be through social media, which is obviously important. I think everybody would agree. The other one is through the curriculum in schools. Do you know, even anecdotally, how we compare to other countries in terms of our ability and our willingness to include this in the curriculum and educate younger generations?

Ms. Kathryn White: I absolutely do know that, as part of the World Federation of UNAs, which represents over 100 countries around the world. I would encourage the Government of Canada to support UNA-Canada to do some of these educational initiatives—in other words, to allow us to engage young people in Canada.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: We don't even have to start from scratch. We can just engage UNA-Canada to do that.

Ms. Kathryn White: Yes, we know a little bit about it, including our polling, our engagement with governments and so on, and of course the willingness to do this. In Canada, you will know we refer to "educational materials" as opposed to "curriculum" because, of course, this is a provincial matter. We have relationships with schools, universities and colleges across the country, and we would be happy to do more of this.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: How much time do I have?

The Chair: You have a minute and 20 seconds left.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Your organization published a report titled "The Canadian Contribution to United Nations Peacekeeping". In it, you discuss Canada's role in peacekeeping in the context of 2013. Particularly, you mention that, despite Canada's exemplary record in UN peacekeeping, "the extent of its contribution, both in terms of peacekeeping personnel and percentage of cost of peacekeeping missions, are on a clear decline.... The extent to which Canada's future commitment to UN Peacekeeping will be sustained or increased remains to be seen."

Can you compare the context of Canada's contributions to peacekeeping from 2013 to today? What changes have you seen?

Ms. Kathryn White: I think we've made some incredible changes, including, of course, our recent deployment to Mali. It's not simply in those numbers—and my colleagues have said this. The changes are in terms of the contributions we're making to elevating the role of civil society, and the discipline—whether it's from our CDS or our minister—in talking about the engagement of women, peace and security. Canada has had a leadership voice in the UN itself on these issues.

On youth, peace and security, for example, the Government of Canada provided funds to the UN to do some of this research with young people. It's not simply in terms of the deployment. The deployment has changed significantly as well, and that has been recognized in the international community.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Thank you.

The Chair: MP Martel, you have seven minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Hello.

● (1135)

[*English*]

My question is going to be in French.

[*Translation*]

It is for you, Ms. Woroniuk.

Do you think the United Nations is doing enough to ensure progress in Mali? Should Canada be doing more?

[*English*]

Ms. Beth Woroniuk: Thank you for the question.

I am not an expert on the Mali mission. However, on supporting women in peacekeeping, I will comment generally that we know there is more work to be done. There is more that the UN could and should be doing. It's important that we have initiatives like the Elsie initiative, and that we have strong Canadian statements across the board on supporting women in peacekeeping. It's also important, as my colleague mentioned, to look for ways to engage local populations, and women's organizations in particular .

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Martel: So you think that Canada is doing enough.

Do you think that the UN is doing enough? I'm sorry, I didn't really understand your answer. I asked you whether the United Nations and Canada could do more when it comes to women.

[*English*]

Ms. Beth Woroniuk: As I mentioned, I'm not an expert on the specifics of the Mali situation, but we have heard consistently that the UN could do more across the board. There have been concerns raised that as budgets for peace support operations are decreased, one of the first places where there are cuts is gender advisers. There is a real concern that these issues are seen as less than core or less than important. When money is in short supply, some of the work on relating to local populations and some of the training on gender equality issues are the things that the missions cut.

Yes, there is more that the United Nations could be doing across the board to live up to its commitments on women in peace support operations.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Martel: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: MP Bezan, go ahead.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

How much time do I have?

The Chair: You have about four minutes.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Jones, you're talking about the three options Canada has as part of the modern-day counterterrorism operations that need to occur. You mentioned NATO and the coalition of the willing, as we're doing in Iraq and Syria right now. You also talked about hardening UN peacekeeping.

We have heard from other witnesses here that we need to do more under chapter VII. Is that where you would see that hardening of UN peacekeeping? It would be more counterterrorism operations, more military assets in the field to bring about the change toward a peaceful resolution in those terrorist regions that are afflicted with the counter-insurgency we're seeing.

Mr. Bruce Jones: I think the way things are arranged in Mali is fairly sophisticated, with the French providing essentially the higher and direct CT operations, and the UN having a wider role. Even then, even in that context, the UN has to have the kinds of troop contributors that are capable of responding to and confronting attacks from AQIM and others.

Almost all operations since the mid-nineties have operated under chapter VII. That's a standard at this stage. The issue is, what's the character and the quality of the troop contributors? If you have an operation that has the option of responding under chapter VII but has low-capability troop contributors, you will end up with a real challenge between the purpose of why it's there and the authority it has, on the one hand, and its actual capabilities on the other.

Mali, Lebanon, Congo, the three places I mentioned, are where you've seen troop contributors come in that have a stronger capability and a willingness to be on the tougher edge of the peacekeeping spectrum. That has allowed the UN to implement its mandates in a more effective way in those contexts.

Mr. James Bezan: With respect to supporting peace operations, you said, "Unfortunately, the UN's rules still mean that decisions made in the Department of Field Support are subject to the arcane and cumbersome tools of the Department of Management, which oversees headquarters operations. This dual key system introduces major inefficiencies and unnecessary redundancy."

Perhaps you could talk about whether the UN has moved any closer to making sure that the peace operations—or peacemaking or peacekeeping, whatever you want to call it, the day-to-day operations, the management decisions—have gotten more modernized.

● (1140)

Mr. Bruce Jones: Yes, it's making progress. Nobody would accuse the UN of being an efficient institution. That is not the standard. It's still a highly inefficient institution.

Progress has been made under the last Secretary-General on improving the management practices for peacekeeping. The Department of Field Support has greater autonomy than it did before, and that has allowed some of the practices that are necessary for sophisticated field operations to be less impeded by the kinds of bureaucratic strictures of the Department of Management. It's a work in progress, though.

Mr. James Bezan: Thank you.

How much time do I have?

The Chair: You have about a minute.

Mr. James Bezan: You wrote just last month, "Various multinational task forces have deployed directly to areas affected by the twin ills of civil war and transnational terrorism." You went on to say, regarding Mali, "In a fragile neighborhood with a history of poor governance and limited resources, this joint force targets cross-border operations of criminal networks and terrorist groups to deter violence, radicalization, and corruption."

Is it a fair assessment to say that there isn't peace to keep there, that when you look at the G5 Sahel, supported by the French and the UN Alliance, we need to be fighting terrorism and quit talking about peacekeeping when things are just in so much disarray?

Mr. Bruce Jones: Peacekeeping has been in evolution for a long time. It's very rare in the contemporary period to deploy into a context where there's a perfect peace and all you're doing is implementing agreements. In almost all contexts, you have subgroups, partial groups or splinter groups that are attacking the peace or trying to undermine it. In what I described as the reform period, post-mid-nineties, peacekeepers had to be vigilant and fight back, push back against spoilers and others trying to undermine the peace. There is no such thing as a perfect static peace that you're just implementing.

Mali is farther out on that spectrum. You have actors who want to implement the peace, actors who are trying to negotiate that, and then others, like AQIM, who have no interest in the peace.

You have to be able to operate in those two realities simultaneously. On the one hand, there are groups you can work with to move forward on a political process while maintaining the threat of being able to deter spoilers, but, simultaneously, you have to be fighting back against AQIM and some other groups. These two realities are central to everything that happens in civil war management. Very rarely do we see perfect peace in which you're simply implementing the agreements of that peace.

The Chair: MP Garrison, go ahead.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Thanks very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to start with a couple of quick questions for Dr. Jones, just to follow up.

You talked about the three options for Canadian participation in peacekeeping. When you did that, you didn't say very much about the post-peacekeeping situation that arises. Would you say that all three of those options have equal opportunities or equal benefits when it comes to what happens after achieving some kind of peace settlement?

Mr. Bruce Jones: No. I actually think one of the real strengths of the UN is the multi-dimensionality of its operations, which blend more smoothly into the post-conflict phase. NATO proved particularly bad at this, despite repeated efforts to get it to adopt a more multi-dimensional approach. Afghanistan is just not in the DNA of that institution. It's not how its headquarters are set up. Coalitions of the willing are experimenting with this. The Global Coalition against Daesh has done some things in this space that are creative, but it's a very incipient phase. The UN has a lot of experience with the transition from the more intensive peacekeeping phase to the post-conflict phase, recognizing that those are blurry distinctions for the reason I described. I actually think that's a substantial strength of the UN.

There are still weaknesses in the UN in terms of how it organizes its development assistance and its relationship with the World Bank. That's all work in progress as well. But the UN is starting from a better starting point on that than are the coalitions of the willing or NATO.

● (1145)

Mr. Randall Garrison: Would you say that the UN has a similar advantage when it comes to keeping a focus on the peace process during the conflict?

Mr. Bruce Jones: Yes. This is, I think, the most important dimension of what the UN learned in the phase from the mid-nineties onward—that your North Star is always the peace process. You're deploying force; you're deploying economic assets; you're engaging your men for operations, etc., but you're always trying to advance the peace process. You saw the report of the 2016 UN panel of experts that talked about the primacy of politics, and that's what they were referring to. You always want to have the peace process, with all the constraints and limits that it has, as the North Star of how you're organizing your assets.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you, Dr. Jones.

I want to turn to our other two witnesses. Thank you for being here today.

In your presentations, both of you made reference to things we need to do to make sure that women who are deployed are more successful. Maybe we'll start with Ms. Woroniuk. You could tell us if you have specific recommendations about what those things are.

Ms. Beth Woroniuk: First, I think it's important that the only dangers women encounter be the ones they signed up for. From talking to women deploying to peace operations, I think they are quite willing to take on the risks of all peacekeepers, but they should be kept safe in barracks and not have threats from other peacekeepers or be victims of blue-on-blue violence. We have to deal with that.

The second one is that we have to ensure that training is adequate and applied across the board, and that women receive the same kind of training opportunities as men. We also have to ensure that facilities and gear respond to the needs of both women and men. Just as a small example, we still hear stories of women using rucksacks that aren't made for women's bodies. We have to look at procurement and equipment.

We also have to make sure that women have the same opportunities. There are many stories from peace operations of women being relegated to administrative tasks. In many cases, this is not what they signed up to do. Women should have access to the same level of challenges and opportunities as men.

There are others, but I'll leave some time for my colleague to respond.

Ms. Kathryn White: Thank you.

I'm going to raise this bar a bit more and say that this is also about women in leadership positions. When we talk about developing new legal frameworks and about sclerotic processes and so on, this means that women need to be engaged, period. We know that successful, prosperous societies benefit. We know that peacekeeping does, as well.

I would also like to bring forward the issue of CT and gender. Women are actors and agents, including on issues like terrorism. I caution the committee against somehow talking about simply elevating women and providing them this specific opportunity. This is across the board. As I said earlier, it's the whole command of the military, right through to the fact that we're looking at civil military affairs as GE 9. This is an important issue that should not be ancillary, in my opinion.

Mr. Randall Garrison: You anticipated my next question. How do we ensure that we get more women into those leadership roles, and how do we ensure that the men in leadership roles get additional training when we have women in peace and security?

I'll start with either one of you.

Ms. Kathryn White: Let me dive into it. I think one of the ways, at the very basic level, is through gender advisers. As I said, in DPKO it is a contribution that Canada could make directly and that would make a difference. I'm going to be a little bit mischievous here, since it is the season. You may have seen the poster that says, "My favourite season is the fall of the patriarchy."

In a way, we have to see women more broadly as agents and actors. We've seen issues south of the border that have been quite alarming. In terms of representation, I think that in Canada it means encouraging women to be involved in their communities' governance as well. I think there are many ways to do this. One of them.... In fact, I will also tell you that UNA-Canada hosts the largest diversity or anti-racism in the country and has done so for over 20 years.

One of the issues I'm concerned about is making sure that, as we talk about issues of race and diversity, we reach out to young, white, marginalized rural boys and that we include everyone so they know that it is an asset for all of us to be engaged.

● (1150)

Ms. Beth Woroniuk: Sorry, I'm....

The Chair: That's okay. We might have time to circle back on that thought, but I'm going to have to yield the floor to MP Robillard.

The floor is yours.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank all the witnesses for their excellent presentations.

I will ask my questions in French and they will be addressed to Ms. White.

In light of UN Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1889, is priority being given to involving women in conflict resolution efforts as a fundamental aspect of peacekeeping and international security?

Ms. Kathryn White: Thank you for your question.

[*English*]

I think it's an important one. I'm going to dive in and say that, in some ways, Resolution 1325 is more about the empowerment of women. Resolution 1889 is also interesting and important; however, it talks about women solely as victims. I think we have to make sure that we engage on both of these issues.

My colleague talked about sexual exploitation and abuse in military settings, sometimes blue on blue. At the same time, we have to work to see women in this role of leadership and governance, including post-conflict. I certainly focus my remarks here on peacekeeping, as opposed to peace-building and peace operations. There is a vast opportunity here, in recognition of your question and other questions. Having good men champions asking these questions is very important to the success in the future.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Robillard: In light of UN Security Council resolution 2242, adopted in 2015, which sets a target of doubling the current involvement of women in peacekeeping operations by 2020, how do Canada's efforts in the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations contribute to achieving these targets?

[*English*]

Ms. Kathryn White: It's an important question. I think it will make quite a difference. It's creating new norms, in a way, a new normative process to say that women should be there. I spoke earlier about some of those risks—for example, that we don't push women who are in militaries to do two deployments a year. Canada, frankly, is leading. I think the average for women's engagement in militaries in NATO countries is 5% to 10%. We're pretty close to 15%, and certainly I believe Jonathan Vance when he says that he wants to get that up to 25%. It is initiatives like this that can make a difference. Again, I gave you my proviso, which is the risk, of course, as well.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Robillard: To what extent are concerns related to women, peace, and security incorporated in UN peacekeeping operations mandates, mediation efforts, and humanitarian and development activities?

[*English*]

Ms. Kathryn White: This is not insignificant. Canada isn't the only country that believes in feminism and has expectations of the UN, and DPKO in particular. I'm happy to say that, as you may know, Jean-Pierre Lacroix was here as part of the UN Defence Ministerial, and he's taken these issues on board. I would cite my neighbour and colleague and friend here to say that there are many issues to be addressed, but certainly having leadership that says women must be at these tables is making a difference, albeit slowly.

● (1155)

Ms. Beth Woroniuk: I'll just add that in 2015 there were three major United Nations studies done, and I'm sure you've had lots of people who have referenced the high-level panel on peace operations. Another study done that same year was on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325. One of its major findings was that countries are very willing to line up and say they support the resolutions and women's efforts to build peace, but the funding has not kept pace.

Over and over again, member states of the UN are not willing to step forward and sign the cheques to put their money where their mouth is on this important agenda, so this is something that has been highlighted globally as a real gap in terms of turning the nice words of these resolutions into reality.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Robillard: Do UN peacekeeping operations include a component on conflict prevention? If so, what does that look like and how is this component being implemented?

[*English*]

Ms. Kathryn White: This is part of a comprehensive approach, from dealing with failing and fragile states to general governance and development. In a way, our investments—including Canada's, but those of the UN as a whole—are in development. I'm going to come back to the sustainable development goals.

It is often poverty, exacerbated by the effects of climate change and of unequal access to education and so on, that underlies many conflicts. As I mentioned in my remarks, it isn't just access to jobs—especially for young men—but access to meaningful jobs. Of course, the world is changing in terms of what we can expect meaningful jobs to be. There may be few of them as AI moves forward, and so on.

Yes, you should be assured, but I would also encourage you to exercise your governance role to continue to push the UN to keep this focus on the whole sequence, from development to peace-keeping to peace-building, peace operations and so on.

The Chair: Thank you for that.

We're going to go to five-minute questions now. The first five-minute question goes to MP Fisher.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses for being here today. I appreciate your testimony.

Ms. White, in your UN brief entitled "Extremism: A Women, Peace and Security Approach", you mention that the role of women is often seen as that of peace builders, with less emphasis on their role as active agents in conflict. You also mention that women play various roles in violent extremism, including as victims, actors and peacemakers.

If we continue to encourage and recruit more women to take part in peacekeeping operations—Ms. Woroniuk, you talked about the Elsie initiative, for example—do the missions stand a greater chance of countering violent extremism? In your opinion, what specific roles can or do women play in peacekeeping operations that ensure a greater chance of success?

Ms. Kathryn White: First of all, it behooves us to see women as agents broadly, as you've expressed there. I will attempt to give an answer to that. My first response would be that we need the data. We need to do the research. We're at the learning spot. In fact, this is a place where Canada could provide some leadership, by gathering that data, both qualitative and quantitative—I'm thinking about Bruce, since we have an academic here—to dive into those conversations, as well as data points. I think there's an opportunity here.

The blunt truth is that we don't know yet. In fact, what we hear from those of us who have been on missions in the past is that women in conflict states are often not that thrilled to see peacekeepers at all. They want the peace, but it's not magic for them to simply see the blue berets.

I am hopeful. There is some indication that the presence of women throughout the peace ops and peace-building system will make a difference, because women will see their roles. Of course, it will change their roles. You've heard about Afghanistan or other patriarchies, where—to use a male analogy—we're moving the goal sticks forward on gender writ large. In our own societies, we know that we have benefited enormously from this, in terms of peace, rule of law, prosperity, and so on.

We have indications that it will make a positive difference. Your question is important, because I think Canada can contribute to collecting some of that data.

● (1200)

Mr. Darren Fisher: How much time do I have left, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: You have two minutes.

Mr. Darren Fisher: I think this will take more than two minutes.

Beth, would you also like to answer that last question?

Ms. Beth Woroniuk: Some of the interesting work being done on countering violent extremism or countering terrorism involves work at the grassroots level and the work that women's organizations are doing to engage communities and young men. They are often the ones doing the counter-narratives and doing the nitty-gritty work of discussion, even visiting young men who they hear are in danger of being radicalized.

They face three different problems. One is that they don't have the funding to do their work. Second, they are often not listened to by local authorities. We have numerous examples from Afghanistan where women's organizations warned authorities about radicalization that was happening. They weren't listened to, and then buses were attacked or arms were sold. Third, they often experience repression from their own governments when they're trying to do some of this work.

I would focus attention on the really important grassroots work that women's organizations are doing on countering terrorism.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Who did you say wasn't listening to the warnings?

Ms. Beth Woroniuk: Local authorities and local leaders often don't believe that women have something to say on political matters.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Go ahead, MP Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan: Thank you, Chair.

I have a question for all of you, but I will start with Dr. Jones. When you were before the Senate committee on foreign relations, back in 2015, you were talking about peace operations. You said that one of the key points is about "putting an end to sexual exploitation and abuse—actions that erode the local and international legitimacy of peacekeeping." Canada is over in Mali, together with numerous other nations. Where are the biggest challenges right now regarding sexual exploitation? Which of our partner nations have been violating that code of conduct about respecting women and girls?

You also mentioned your concern about the behaviour of some of the partner nations in UN peacekeeping, as well as the often misogynistic countries. I'd like to get your feedback on that.

Mr. Bruce Jones: It's an ongoing concern. Some of the things we saw in the Central African Republic were particularly egregious in these terms, with a number of the contributors there.

The acid point here always comes back to the fact that the UN itself doesn't really have either the legal authority or the operational capacity to prosecute soldiers who engage in this behaviour or commanders who allow it. That has to come back to host nations. Canada could demonstrate leadership, if it encounters an issue like this, by engaging in the correct forms of accountability of its own troops.

Mr. James Bezan: Should this come before the International Criminal Court, then? I know that all those nations have something like our own National Defence Act, where we have our own court martial system, but when it's our own soldiers and our own troops doing this, should some of these challenges be brought before the ICC?

Mr. Bruce Jones: I don't think they rise to the level of war crimes by the ICC definition. More to the point, they would have to go through national authorities first. If, then, it were instance of a Canadian soldier engaged in sexual exploitation or abuse, it would be up to the Canadian authorities to investigate and provide accountability for that.

The point I was trying to make is that a number of countries have not taken the necessary steps to provide that accountability. The UN can't force them to do it. It has gotten more selective about which countries it's willing to allow to contribute, if they aren't taking those steps. Canada could play a leadership role in encouraging other substantial contributors to make sure they have the national accountability mechanisms to deal with those instances.

● (1205)

Mr. James Bezan: Ms. Woroniuk, go ahead.

Ms. Beth Woroniuk: Just following up on this, the question of jurisdiction has plagued peace support operations on this, given that the discipline or punishment of members is the responsibility of the troop-contributing country. That's why one of the suggestions coming from outside the UN is to establish an arm's-length body that would investigate this. We know it's often very difficult for an institution to police and investigate itself.

If we had a referral mechanism that was outside of the UN and that could look at this and come up with recommendations, it would still not totally deal with the issue of holding individual perpetrators responsible, but it might help to establish new norms and new ways of working and bringing light to some of these concerns.

Mr. James Bezan: What about sanctions against nations that do not provide any accountability for the activities and bad behaviour of the troops? For that criminality in particular, if they're not going to prosecute and court-martial these individuals, then—fairly—should we not sanction them and maybe not allow them to participate in UN peacekeeping missions?

Ms. Beth Woroniuk: As our fellow witnesses said, there are now issues being raised in terms of asking for troops from various countries. I'm not sure whether specific sanctions would work, because I think it's also an issue related to power structure and relations with local communities.

Also, when we have sexual exploitation and abuse, that's only a symptom of other, broader issues that have to be addressed in terms of how peace support operations, civilian and military, relate to local populations. It's a signal, then, that something else is wrong, which requires further attention and the addressing of these issues.

Mr. James Bezan: Ms. White, does the UNA believe there should be, at the very least, naming and shaming of those nations that aren't following the code of conduct?

Ms. Kathryn White: Again, your question is very important, and I wish there were a simple answer to it.

You will have seen that the largest troop-contributing nations tend to be militaries that don't have the same disciplined command and control structure. They may not be as well equipped even to go in the field. They are, in some ways, probably more at risk and coming from societies that might be strongly patriarchal. Add to that a conflict situation where women are vulnerable and may be lacking food and shelter. It takes a certain moral fortitude, both in command and control. However, imagine those young people we are putting, on both of sides of this line, into mortal danger, frankly.

All that is to say that it's a vexing issue. As my colleague Bruce said, it's not appropriate for the ICC. However, as he suggested, we can provide that training and that discipline to other countries to make sure these changes happen. They will happen over time.

The Chair: Thank you.

MP Spengemann, go ahead.

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Chair, thank you very much.

I want to use my time to ask you for some very practical political advice. One of the most vulnerable populations in recent conflicts has been the LGBTI community. There have been horrific atrocities, often systematic, if you look at Iraq, Syria, Libya and a lot of countries in that region.

On October 14, just a couple of weeks before this committee goes to New York, the House of Commons is sending a delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which is the forum of the world's parliaments. It's actually older than the UN. It has about 176 member countries, and a lot of discussions take place on peace and security.

The question of LGBTI rights doesn't even get onto the agenda. There is a known group of countries that will mobilize to vote this down democratically so that there isn't even room to discuss.

From your insights, your contacts and your experience, what pathways should we follow or explore to make sure that, in conflicts, this particular segment of civilian populations is better protected than it has been in the past?

● (1210)

Ms. Beth Woroniuk: It's something very important. Again, one way is supporting and recognizing local resistance, local organizations and groups that are mobilized around these issues. These are the activists who know their situation the best. These are the activists who stay in times of conflict. They're not international NGOs that leave, yet we have very few mechanisms in our aid program or our peace support operations to support these groups, to strengthen them and to fund their priorities, their agendas and their issues.

Related to that, another important issue is how Canada supports human rights defenders. We have guidelines at Global Affairs on human rights defenders and Canadian support, and they are currently undergoing a process of revision.

There have been a number of organizations here in Canada pushing to ensure that these new guidelines reflect the specific needs of women human rights defenders and LGBTI rights defenders. One of the really important differences is that many male human rights defenders face repression from the state or from state actors, but a lot of women human rights defenders and people of different sexual orientations face challenges from family members, because they're violating gender norms in the community. I think we have to recognize that and make sure our guidelines support these activists on the ground.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Operationally, are peacekeepers equipped to identify and protect those populations? Have they been in recent cases that you're aware of?

Ms. Beth Woroniuk: My understanding is that this is very new, in terms of looking at protecting LGBTQI populations, and this is an area that we do need to give more attention to. It involves how you relate to local populations in general, but looking specifically at groups that have particular needs is an important priority going forward.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Sexual orientation is not one-for-one mapped onto gender. The gender advisers you're proposing, the 10 gender advisers you spoke of in the beginning, would they be able to take on that role to strengthen peacekeeping mechanisms and the responsibility to protect LGBTI populations?

Ms. Kathryn White: Since I raised that issue, I will concur that it is absolutely possible. Again, a part of what Canada can do—and even you can do it through your own deployments—is bring this to the attention.... Part of this is awareness-building. You said that there are many countries where these issues are still very much verboten, not acknowledged and so on. Much as gender was 30 years ago, so it is with LGBTQI.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Thank you for that.

I have 30 seconds left. Just very quickly, would the 10 gender advisers you're proposing be funded by Canada or be Canadians?

Ms. Kathryn White: That's what I'm proposing, that they be funded by Canada.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: They could be other nationalities.

Okay, Mr. Chair, thank you. I think I'm a bit under, but those are my questions.

The Chair: Thank you.

MP Gallant, the floor is yours.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Jones, you've written that cyber-weapons and artificial intelligence are the most prominent frontier threats. Could you please elaborate for the committee on the current and future threats AI poses to international security?

Mr. Bruce Jones: Is that in the context of peacekeeping, or more generally?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: It's generally, on the whole, not just peacekeeping.

Mr. Bruce Jones: Let's look at it on two levels. I think we're already at the beginning of a phase of strategic competition among the United States, China, Russia and others for the use of AI and cyber-weapons and the integration of that into military affairs and strategic economic competition. That's one geopolitical level at which this is going to evolve very rapidly.

I think the second layer, which is very concerning as well, is the ability of non-state groups to effectively use off-the-shelf downloadable apps for AI and other software to significantly increase their capability to use things like remote drones, remote drone swarming, social media manipulation, etc., both for direct attacks on governments or peacekeepers in a conflict setting and also for terrorist actions outside of those settings.

Those are two very different problems, but I think we're going to see most forms of battlefields, so to speak, whether geopolitical or operational, become increasingly infused with the use of both cyber and AI weapons.

ISIS is way ahead of the curve from other non-state groups in its use of artificial intelligence to drive its recruiting platforms overseas. Other groups will catch on.

● (1215)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: With ISIS and its use of artificial intelligence, what applications are they using, other than facial recognition, for example?

Mr. Bruce Jones: A lot of the recruitment tools they have use AI-enabled software that's much more sophisticated at trolling through social media and identifying people who might be suitable for approaches or recruitment or mobilization. It's similar to the kinds of things the Russians have done in terms of disinformation.

It's really in the social media space and communications space that they've used those tools so far. I think we're going to see them—not necessarily ISIS per se, but non-state groups—use those tools in terms of improving their military capacity, using drones and other instruments of warfare.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: With respect to these emerging applications of AI, and given their place in global security and the battlefields of the future, should parliamentarians be discussing that?

Mr. Bruce Jones: Absolutely.

I don't think there is any domain of peace and security left where cyber and AI aren't central to the dynamics of who is gaining and who is losing capability. That has to be central to any discussion of international security in the coming period.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: The public safety committee would be one, and this committee in particular, the national defence—

Mr. Bruce Jones: To be honest, I don't have a full sense of the kinds of division or responsibility of Canadian parliamentary committees, but certainly across the spectrum of committees that are worried about public safety, foreign policy or international security policy. They should be thinking hard about both artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies as rapidly changing the landscape for both geopolitical and non-state competition.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: In the last few years, have you had an opportunity to interface with the ambassadors from the different countries to NATO, for example the Canadian ambassador to NATO?

Mr. Bruce Jones: With regard to the Canadian ambassador to NATO specifically, I don't think so, but several other ambassadors, including the American ambassador on several occasions, yes.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: When women are in the position of ambassador to NATO, would you say they have an active hand in shaping policy and ways forward in terms of action taken by NATO?

Mr. Bruce Jones: I would say, to a modest degree.

I mean, I think you know perfectly well that policy at NATO is really set in capitals. Foreign and defence ministers are pretty heavily involved in shaping policy for NATO, both on specific operations and in general terms.

Ambassadors can amplify that. They can take initiative to some degree. Ambassadors of the UN are somewhat more empowered, as a typical rule. Certainly ambassadors can make a difference, but I would be modest about that. It's really capitals that drive policy in most instances.

The Chair: We're going to have to hold it there. There will be time at the end, and I'm sure you'll have more time to discuss this.

I'm going to yield the floor to MP Dzerowicz.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank everyone for their excellent presentations.

I'll start with you, Dr. Jones, if that's okay.

I'm fairly new to the committee, so I really appreciated the high-level overview you started with—that we're now in a post-Arab Spring period. The complexity of the conflict is different, so what and whom we're fighting to get to peace in terms of the spoilers and the terrorists is completely different, and thus our peacekeeping and peacemaking also need to be different.

I also appreciated your giving a very good sense of the UN operations in places like Mali, and that for them to implement their objectives and have a better chance of success, it really depends on the quality of the troop contributors. I have a much better appreciation of Canada and our role in Mali as a result of part of the discussion you brought out today, as well as some of the other participants in the study. I'm very grateful for that.

One of the other things you mentioned—and this brings me to my question—is that Canada's participation in Mali gives us legitimacy at the UN to push policy agenda forward. Given the fact that a number of my colleagues are going to the UN, could you maybe elaborate on what policy agenda you think we should be pushing forward as we go to the UN?

● (1220)

Mr. Bruce Jones: Thank you.

There's a debate inside the Secretariat. There's a debate in the membership about the question of what it means for UN peacekeeping to be engaged in contexts where there is a terrorism dimension. It's not comfortable for the UN. There's uncertainty about it. There are concerns about it.

It's very important for Canada to be learning in real time from its operations in Mali and feeding those discussions into the policy debates at the UN. It requires a further elaboration of the concept of impartiality to recognize that if you're confronting a group such as AQIM, which is never going to support a peace process, a sustained tempo of operations in defence against AQIM, whether it's from the French or from the UN, is part of the process of implementing a peace agreement. It's not outside of that. That's part of the reality, to push the envelope in terms of where impartiality confronts strategic spoilers and continuous spoilers against peace operations.

Inside the Secretariat, the legal office and the peacekeeping office understand this, but there is hesitation and nervousness, essentially because some of the "traditional" peacekeeper African countries and some of the smaller Asian countries that have been doing the bulk of the contributions over the last several years are very nervous about it. They don't have the kinds of capability Canada has to defend itself or to be engaged in more offensive operations. They don't want to be put into a context where they're expected to undertake the harder edge of peacekeeping but without the capabilities to do it.

That circle cannot be squared, unless countries such as Canada, Holland, and others that have more advanced capabilities are in those operations and bringing the policy argument back to New York.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: That's extremely helpful. Thank you so much.

I don't have a lot of time. Dr. Jones, I'm hoping to loop back to you on a couple of other questions. However, I'd like to turn my attention to Ms. White and Ms. Woroniuk.

Thanks for the excellent conversation.

As a woman who has worked only in male-dominated professions, the business world and politics, I've learned that for a woman to really have an impact, we need to actually get to a critical mass really quickly. We're in what I call the "uncomfortable phase". Part of the thing that I can't quite figure out in our conversation is, if we're at 5%, 10% or 15%, how do we move to 30% as quickly as possible, where we can actually have that critical mass to create change? That's question number one.

Two, it's more about sponsorship versus mentorship. How is it that we really do need to have senior male leaders sponsoring female leaders within international peacekeeping, within peace and conflict, to be able to actually get to those leadership positions?

Three, we need to create groups where women can actually support each other within peace and conflict.

I wonder whether both of you can address how we can actually achieve each of those. First, do you agree? Second, how can we actually move the bar on any one of those three? Thank you.

Ms. Kathryn White: First of all, thank you for the question. I'll dive into it. In fact, I'm also going to touch really briefly on Kerry Buck, who has just left as our ambassador to NATO and has made quite a difference in terms of taking policy forward.

I'll also give a shout-out to my colleague and friend Clare Hutchinson, who is the SRSG on gender at NATO. She is a fearless advocate. In answer to your question, she has gotten comfortable in this setting as an advocate. I'm also happy to say that the SRSG of NATO has referred to the "Hutchinson effect".

I see that we have little time.

In a way, we also have to acknowledge that women who decide to go into the military often don't decide to go in because they want to be peacekeepers. They go into the military because they want to be part of the cadre, the body, or they want to contribute in other ways. Therefore, in a way, it's providing safe places for discussion that also brings their sisters- and brothers-in-arms to that conversation.

Frankly, I suspect that for people such as you, who have come through male-dominated professions and so on.... You have a governance role, but there's a civil society component for those of us who have had the privilege to actually champion women in those settings as well. Thank you for bringing it up.

● (1225)

The Chair: Thank you.

MP Garrison, go ahead.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank Mr. Spengemann for bringing up LGBTQI issues, because it's nice to have someone other than the only gay guy at the table raising them. However, I think that's relevant to what we were just talking about here.

Both of you, Ms. White and Ms. Woroniuk, made reference to having men re-educated, I would say, on the issues of women, peace and security. I'd like you to say a bit more about any specific proposals you have on how that would really be accomplished at more senior levels.

Ms. Beth Woroniuk: I think this is a really important issue. We often go to meetings to talk about women, peace and security, and 95% of the people sitting around the room are women. I think there are a number of issues. One is leadership. It is really important that support and legitimacy for this issue start at the top.

This is where I think General Vance has made real strides, because he has taken this seriously. I think there is much that we can learn from that. Often we have token support for these issues but we don't see male leaders actually attending the courses, sitting through the discussions, participating in the debates. They will often nominate a woman to go in their place, or they'll find another way not to go. Given military and security sector structures, leadership is absolutely crucial. We have to say that it starts at the top. The men have to put in the time.

We have the evidence now that looking at these issues is a legitimate security issue. We have research showing that peace agreements last longer when women's organizations are involved. We even have research showing that societies with more equal gender relations are less likely to go to war with their neighbours. In addition to being the right thing to do, looking at women, peace and security issues is also the smart thing to do in terms of building peace and in terms of the objectives we're trying to do.

So we have the business case, but we have a lot of people around the room who don't believe in this business case. I think that's an area where we need to have more discussions and more research. What is that tipping point or that nudge that gets people to take this issue seriously and as a legitimate point of departure in this area? I think inviting a broader spectrum of people to the table is a really important starting point. The saying, I think, is that military matters are too important to be left to the military. I think it really applies in this case.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Ms. White, go ahead.

Ms. Kathryn White: I will echo my colleague on these issues. I think you will not be surprised that sometimes when we hear about high-level training, suddenly people are opting out of it as not the most important that they're undertaking. It seems to me that leadership can say that these are mandatory.

I think empathy-based learning always has real, direct value—in the same way that having you around the table saying "It's me" does. We are apparently women, so that does something as well.

The Chair: Thank you.

Given the time on the clock and the number of MPs who have indicated that they want to continue to ask questions, I'll allow a five-minute question period per MP.

I'll start with Mr. Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. White, you wrote a letter to the editor regarding the Mali mission. You pointed out the challenges in Mali with respect to the corruption, the crime, the extremism and the erosion of the state's ability to actually deliver security. As we heard from a number of witnesses, in the Mali situation there may be no peace to keep. The situation is dire.

Are we doing enough as Canada to help Mali?

Ms. Kathryn White: There is always much more to do. This is an important question. I think you raised, even in the description of your question, that it includes efforts—through FIs, through the World Bank and so on—on corruption, which is rampant. Many countries in Africa are losing close to a trillion dollars through corruption.

I mean, think about us making a difference there. Think about engaging young men and women in these countries to start thinking about the jobs of the future and what they could do. As I shared with you earlier, it's not simply employment itself that frees the risk of radicalization; it's also that meaningful engagement. Surely Canada has something to share in that way as well.

I'm reluctant to say that it's always just about sending wheelbarrows full of money, because I think we actually have the human resources, the soft skills and the lessons learned, which we can be sharing directly as well, including the "people to people" of civil society, whether it's women or youth or LGBTI. Imagine having a community member who says, "It's difficult in downtown Toronto as well, but here are the kinds of steps you could set up."

Sometimes we think that these very granular pieces aren't as grand as sending militaries and equipment, but let me tell you, that is how peace is sustained.

● (1230)

Mr. James Bezan: When you talk about the issue of smart pledges, is that going to work and be effective in the operations in Mali?

Ms. Kathryn White: It is, if people like you continue to hold our government's feet to the fire on what you expect of it. We can only say, this is how Canada is going to see it and this is how we're going to act. As a respected member of the larger international community, we're going to ask others to do the same.

Mr. James Bezan: Dr. Jones, what about the issue of smart pledges and whether it's enough for Canada's contribution to the Mali mission in particular?

Mr. Bruce Jones: I'm sorry, I don't know what you're referring to in terms of smart pledges by Canada. Are they conditional pledges of aid, or...?

Mr. James Bezan: I guess it's the rhetoric from the Liberal government here that they're going to be more intelligent in the types of capabilities they're offering. In Mali, it's an air task force for medevac and logistical support. One thing we weren't told about the so-called smart pledge is that it would also be supporting the G5 Sahel anti-terrorism operations. I just wanted to get your feedback on Canada's contributions to the Mali mission and what else should be done to see mission success.

Mr. Bruce Jones: I would say two things, both hard. One, which could come out of these kinds of discussions, is a clear sense of bipartisan support for this. I'm in Washington, so I'm not exactly in a strong position to talk about bipartisanship, but as a general matter, when a country can communicate that this is not just this government but a wider initiative, it gives leverage to whatever tool the government is deploying, and sustaining that commitment over time would be important.

Look, we have two choices. We can either have a very weak UN system that's not really capable of helping to stabilize a country like Mali, or we can have a somewhat more capable UN system, and for that to happen it has to have countries like Canada contributing at the tougher edge. I thought it was important that Canada went into Mali. I was a little disappointed that it limited itself to air support and rescue operations. I would have liked to see Canada take on a role more similar to what the Dutch had taken on, pushing the envelope a little further. Maybe that's something that can evolve as Canada learns more about Mali and stays in and evolves its operations.

Again, one thing is what we are delivering in Mali. The other is how we are essentially retraining and retooling the UN to be an effective tool and effective instrument for helping to stabilize fragile states with CT problems on the smaller end of that phenomenon, which is an instrument we need to have available to us.

The Chair: Thank you.

The floor goes to MP Spengemann.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Thank you very much.

This is a very ambitious study, and it's an ambitious report that we're going to be presenting. We won't be able to answer nearly every question, but I think it's important for the committee to flag all aspects of the relevant substance, and to identify those areas where further study may be appropriate by other committees, or even by this committee.

Do any of you have any comments on UN reform as it relates to peacekeeping in the coming decades that you would like to share with the committee?

Ms. Kathryn White: Actually, Bruce, you can go ahead.

Mr. Bruce Jones: I would offer two perspectives. One, Secretary-General Guterres just announced a few months ago a series of reforms integrating some of the regional desks in peacekeeping. Those are perfectly valid managerial reforms and aren't really going to move the needle in terms of policy. They're useful managerial improvements.

The real reform will come—and I'm repeating myself here—as countries like Holland, Canada, Spain, China and others start contributing more to the tougher end of the UN peacekeeping operations. That will drive a debate, and it will drive policy change about how we need to be organized to support that more effectively.

The management of the UN, the reform of the UN, has lagged behind the challenges we're going to confront in the field, and that won't change until we create that sort of back and forth between countries that are deploying in the field but also have policy weight in New York.

I've raised issues before on the question of how we interpret impartiality, the legal basis for how we're operating in some of these contexts. All of these need to evolve. That's the real policy reform, moving the deck chairs on which department is relating to them. That's fine. The real evolution needs to occur in understanding that we are now in a phase where CT and civil war management are fused, and we have to understand the policy implications of that.

● (1235)

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Ms. White and Ms. Woroniuk, is there anything you'd like to add?

Ms. Beth Woroniuk: I will just add that I think the other element that's important in looking at UN reform is to bring the commitment to the women's rights and gender equality agenda together with the UN reform agenda. These should not be seen as two separate, parallel tracks. We have had emphasis on parity for women in senior management levels at the UN, but I think it's also important that we look at the commitments to gender analysis and gender mainstreaming and that these be taken seriously as part of UN reform and not seen as a secondary or a side issue.

Ms. Kathryn White: I would agree with my colleague, of course, but I'm also going to suggest, in terms of your research, that you look at some of the emergent threats around cybersecurity and AI. Increasingly, we've seen countries disrupt elections and so on. You can imagine that these threats are only going to get more sophisticated and challenging. It almost goes to reform of doctrine or keeping up with emerging doctrine and legal structures, which of course is what Bruce was describing as well.

We have seen that social media can continue to fuel disruption in countries where we have peacekeepers at risk. This is not idly a future issue; this is an issue right now, and I would encourage you to look at it. I know that UNA-Canada is about to bring together some leading thinkers around Arctic security, as well as climate and oceans. These things are much more interrelated, to make your study even bigger....

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Thank you very much.

Mr. Chair, I'm happy to delegate the remaining minute to any of my colleagues who would like to ask a short question.

The Chair: Mr. Gerretsen, you're next, so either you can take that minute....

Is there anybody else?

You're the next questioner. We'll just roll right into your question. The floor is yours.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Okay.

Ms. Woroniuk...? Is that pronounced right?

Ms. Beth Woroniuk: Yes. If you want the Ukrainian, it's pronounced "Voroniuk".

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Yes, I think that's easier.

Mr. James Bezan: There are a couple of us sitting around the table.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I want to ask you about the ambassador position that Minister Freeland announced last week. In particular, there was also a motion before the House with regard to this. I'm wondering if you can comment on some of the expert opinion that has been coming forward regarding this position.

In particular, Matthew Legge advised that the position should have three general roles, with the first being a policy input role in Canada; the second being the authority to represent Canada in select international forums; and the third being to travel the country to get direct input from the Canadian public. I'm curious to hear what your position is on that and what role you would like to see such an ambassador play.

Ms. Beth Woroniuk: Thank you very much for the question. We were very pleased and very excited to see the announcement of this position.

A high-level champion to support the implementation of Canada's many commitments on women, peace and security has been a long-standing request of members of our network. We see very much that the primary purpose of this position should be to catalyze the implementation of the commitments that already exist.

Our national action plan on women, peace and security is a complex document. It's a whole-of-government document. There are now new ministries that have signed on, but everyone—from Public Safety to Status of Women Canada to Global Affairs—is involved in implementing the national action plan. We see a critical role for this ambassador to be inward-looking and to help catalyze in making sure that all of these departments are working together. It is the first function, as you outlined in the policy function, but it's much more than that. It's not articulating policy but ensuring that the commitments we have made are resourced and actually actioned.

We would definitely see the second function—the ability to represent Canada at select forums—as a third and relatively low priority for this position. Certainly, involving Canadians in discussions should be an important piece of the remit of the ambassador as well.

● (1240)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Focusing on the third comment you made there, and going back to my earlier discussion with Ms. White about education and the importance of educating the Canadian public on why it's extremely important for Canada to be involved in peacekeeping throughout the world, would you say that this position could take on some of that role or that it's being recommended that this position take it on?

Ms. Beth Woroniuk: I would hope that the position takes on not just peacekeeping but talking about peace and security more broadly as well, in terms of how Canada is involved in the world and how we're engaged in building peace, not just keeping peace. Certainly, we've seen that when people start to talk about these issues, there's real interest and real curiosity about, say, why a Syrian family ended up here. Why are we sponsoring a Syrian refugee? What are the causes of the conflict in Syria?

In term of talking about those issues from a women, peace and security perspective specifically, or more broadly in terms of what Canada is doing in the world, I think there is a lot of interest on the part of Canadians to see how these various pieces all fit together.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: We've done a number of studies now, whether it's on this issue or NATO or NORAD. One of the interesting things that I've found in this committee is that as we've seen this decline of interest or willingness to participate, we also seem to see a decline in the amount of engagement that the everyday Canadian has and the understanding of why peacekeeping or peace-promoting is important throughout the world.

We've seen this with NATO. Fewer and fewer Canadians understand the relevance of NATO. It's the same thing with NORAD.

Regarding the question I asked Ms. White, I would like to give you an opportunity to respond to it as well. How important is it to keep Canadians engaged in the discussions about why this is important? How important is it to get it out of the political exercise that we seem to embark on, and into the discussions that Canadians are having?

Ms. Beth Woroniuk: I think it's important to ask maybe different kinds of questions. Where we've found real interest is in exploring what security means and how you can have different understandings of security. Do definitions of security differ depending on who you are and where you fit into this? I think it's not just, "Why is NATO important?" but "What is security?" What is Canada's role in building security elsewhere, and how do those issues affect us as Canadians?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: That is kind of the underlying theme to then support the others. Okay.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

MP Fisher is next.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

There seems to be a theme in this study, and we've said it a lot, about how much has changed since the last time we were really involved in peacekeeping operations, and how much the role of a peacekeeper has changed. Certainly as Canadians, we're not just observers anymore, as we were perhaps seen as in the past. While it's important to learn from the past, it's also important to recognize that peacekeeping operations will be a lot different than they've ever been since we got involved.

My question is for Ms. White. Perhaps the others want to chime in as well, but I do want to split my time, the last two and a half minutes, with MP Dzerowicz.

Is the current peacekeeping approach that we are pushing and evolving and working on right now much more realistic? Are we on the right track?

Ms. Kathryn White: I believe we are, because, of course, I also have faith in the fact that we have highly trained, disciplined and respected Canadian Forces. That's the baseline in terms of the deployment. I think they've also taken the lessons of Afghanistan on board, as well as the uglier deployments that we had earlier, including this inclusive security approach. I think it's deeply necessary.

I also mentioned Antonio Guterres's push for action that we've been a part of. In a way, as you know, the idea with various troop-contributing countries is that you also want to know that your partners have your back. I think those lessons, in many ways, also inform our decisions about where we are. I think we are positioned to take forward that kind of training, insight and even intelligence-gathering. I think we are increasingly respected on that front.

In terms of how we're deploying and so on, I gave you a list of recommendations. I would say that, for example, the Germans and the Dutch are making multi-year commitments, and we've gone in basically for six months. We send young Canadians on UN internships and their hosts always say, "If only we had them longer." You can imagine that, in a country of conflict, for us to make a longer commitment, even if we are rotating the expertise and the contributions we're making.... I think there would be deep value there.

● (1245)

Mr. Darren Fisher: I would love to hear from the other two witnesses. I saw Dr. Jones nodding his head, but we are at two and a half minutes, and I promised the extra time to MP Dzerowicz.

The Chair: You're at three minutes, but we just have one more person and we have a bit more time. If you want to continue that thought, I can circle back to MP Dzerowicz afterwards.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Okay.

Beth—it's easier to pronounce your first name.

Ms. Beth Woroniuk: That was a deliberate choice by my parents, actually.

I would agree with Kate that we seem to be on the right track. I think it's really important that we take the lessons we're learning domestically in terms of how our security institutions reflect Canadians, how we act on Canadian values, and then take those globally, not only into specific missions, but also into our advocacy work at different points in the United Nations. If we continue to be true to that, then I think we'll be on solid ground.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Thank you.

Dr. Jones, we have one minute left. I did see you nodding your head, but that's not on the public record.

Mr. Bruce Jones: Yes, I would strongly support the notion of longer-term commitments. I would hope that Canada would learn from its first experiences in Mali—which would give it a wider context in intelligence terms and policy terms about what the situation is—evolve its contribution and stay engaged, both through the peacekeeping arm and through political and development tools. You can't make a huge contribution in six months; you can over a longer time period. The first six months should be a learning exercise that hopefully will continue and deepen.

The Chair: We will go with MP Garrison, and then we will close with MP Dzerowicz.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

At the beginning, Ms. Woroniuk, you talked about four pillars. We've spent some time on the participation of women at all levels of the peace process and peace operations. We've talked about protection and prevention of sexual violence. We haven't talked about the other two very much. Those were the role of women in the prevention of conflict and a post-conflict recovery plan that benefits both genders.

I want to give you a chance to talk about those last two a bit, since we haven't really discussed them. We haven't really spent much time linking peacekeeping and peace operations either to prevention or post-conflict situations.

Ms. Beth Woroniuk: Thank you very much for pointing that out. I think that one of the strengths and attractive elements of the women, peace and security agenda is trying to bring this holistic approach. One of the key points that have been made is that work in this area is not just to make war safe for women. This is not the goal of what we're trying to do.

What we're trying to do is stop conflicts before they start. This calls for different kinds of investments. It calls for development. It calls for early warning. It calls for narratives different from violent extremism. This is also important to put on the agenda, as we know, and I think other witnesses have talked about the various costs of spending a dollar to prevent conflict versus the hundred dollars it costs once the armed conflict has erupted. I think we should focus much more on addressing the root causes of conflict.

Second, looking at what happens post-conflict is really important. We see that sometimes in conflicts gender norms change. Women take on different roles because of the dislocations. It's important in the post-conflict situation that there be opportunities for women as well as men in terms of employment and demobilization.

One of the real challenges in cases where you have women and men who have been members of the armed forces is what we're seeing in Columbia, for example. The women being demobilized from the FARC are often being offered hairdressing and beauty salon as training. These are highly motivated women who know many technical skills, and they are becoming prime recruitment for *narcotrafficantes* because they have these skills, yet formally all we're offering them is hairdressing as an employment opportunity.

It's important to look at these elements and how we build peace as well.

● (1250)

The Chair: MP Dzerowicz, go ahead.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

Dr. Jones, I'm going to start with you, following up on my colleague Mr. Fisher's question about Canada's contribution in Mali, and whether you believe it's a positive contribution to the UN objective of creating conditions for peace.

I hear from you that you wish we took on a lot more of the tougher end of the peacekeeping and were there a little longer, but do you think that, overall, it's a positive contribution?

Mr. Bruce Jones: Yes, absolutely. You can't have the kinds of effective peacekeeping responses that you need in these kinds of conflicts without the airlift and oversight support that Canada is providing, but it's the beginning, not the end of what needs to happen from serious troop contributors.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Absolutely. Just so you know, I'm very clear. You have made very clear the back and forth that needs to happen between knowledge gained on the ground with these high-end operations and efforts and then bringing that back to the UN for policy development so we can start pushing the UN to where it needs to go to address the challenges of UN international peacekeeping in the 21st century. That is now completely ingrained in my head, and I'm very grateful to you for informing us of that.

Ms. Woroniuk, I want to loop back to you and ask if you can respond to the question I asked before. One of my key things is how we get to that critical mass we need for women to have that change. I would love any insight you might be able to provide to us and maybe some recommendations.

Ms. Beth Woroniuk: One of the pieces in the Elsie initiative is to try to understand the barriers that women face, both in joining security institutions and in deployment, because it's very interesting that women deploy internationally at a lower rate than they are members in their national armed forces. So additional barriers have to be taken into account.

One of the really important points so far is that a lot of these barriers are context-specific. A woman in Ghana faces different challenges than a woman in Bangladesh in doing that, but certainly some of the issues that have been raised do relate to sexual harassment. Some women do not deploy because of fear and the stories that other women have told them about the dangers they'll face in deployment. Some are related to the lack of family supports and the length of leaves. Some are even technical issues. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations has minimum standards. One of them includes being able to drive a shift automobile, and women in many of the militaries don't get that kind of training. Some are easy to address by offering that kind of training so women can have the same access once they join.

I think this is a very important area that is being looked at. We're trying to understand these barriers and move forward, and I think they're different globally than they are in Canada.

● (1255)

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: I'm hearing from you that we have to gather some more data so we can figure out how we can leapfrog and transcend in a very big way.

Dr. Jones, I think we heard that we need to focus a little more on stopping conflicts before they start, and think more about the post-conflict stage, once we get to what that new peace looks like and what work we need to do.

In relation to international peacekeeping in Canada, what recommendations might you have around stopping conflicts before they start, looking at the root causes of conflicts?

Mr. Bruce Jones: I confess I'm very old school on this. One of the best conflict analysts of this past quarter century wrote a piece in the early 1990s describing conflict prevention as alchemy for the new world order.

Politics is politics. We intervene badly in it. We don't understand the societies where we've intervening. I'm deeply skeptical of conflict prevention as an agenda, frankly, other than if you're thinking about long-term developmental transformation over the course of decades, which we're engaged in and should be engaged in.

I'm much more focused on stabilizing conflict situations. This requires defeating those who are trying to undermine peace agreements or undermine the state. It's easy sometimes to drop back to notions of prevention and political processes, etc., but ultimately, there are groups that are going to try to undermine peace, undermine the stability of these countries, and they have to be defeated. That's how you protect civilians. That's how you improve the situation in a country.

I know I sound very recalcitrant, but sometimes these softer notions, I think, obfuscate the real challenge in front of us.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: I appreciate that. Thank you so much.

The Chair: Thank you.

Before we close out, I'm going to give the floor to Mr. Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan: Thank you.

I have a quick point of order, Mr. Chair.

For the meeting coming up on Thursday, we still haven't received the notice of meeting or a list of witnesses. It makes it difficult for us to prepare for those upcoming meetings. I would think that it would be at least respectful to have those notices 48 hours in advance, and preferably 72 hours, so we can have the chance to do our research on the witnesses, to be able to bring forward quotes and know the positions of the witnesses on various issues. It gives us a chance on our side to at least have a quick pre-committee meeting to discuss strategy.

The more time we can have, the better. I think it's important. It's respecting our privilege as parliamentarians to do the job we're tasked to do.

The Chair: I respect your remarks. I think that's typically the case with this committee, and the clerk will be on that as soon as we're adjourned for the day.

I want to thank very much the witnesses who contributed to this very important conversation.

For those who were wondering, Dr. Bercuson is stuck in a traffic jam in Calgary in a snowstorm. We've been in touch with him electronically, and he will be forwarding the comments he would have made had he been here via VTC.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Can we not get him on Thursday?

The Chair: He's unavailable. We've tried. The best we can do is get his remarks electronically, which will feed into our report.

Thank you all very much for coming and contributing to this very important topic.

The meeting is adjourned.

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